BOX BUTTE
GENERAL HOSPITAL
2101 Box Butte Avenue • PO Box 810 • Alliance Nebraska 69301
Phone 308.762.6660 • Fax 308.762.1923

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Licensure Unit
Attn: Technical Review Committee
PO Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

Attn: Technical Review Committee, Board of Health, and Dr. Anthone

My name is Jordan Colwell, and I am the Chief Nursing Officer at Box Butte General Hospital in Alliance, NE. I am writing to urge you to recommend against the licensing of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAs) in Nebraska. It is vitally important to Nebraska rural hospitals to maintain health care services in our local communities. These facilities serve to stabilize trauma patients for transfer, deliver babies, perform routine procedures and surgeries, and provide lifesaving care during a pandemic. Rural hospitals are not only a lifeline for patients, but for the entire community.

CRNAs provide the majority of anesthetic care in Nebraska and 100% of the anesthetics delivered at critical access hospitals like Box Butte General. CRNAs are educated and trained to manage complex patients and situations independently. CRNAs earn a bachelor of science in nursing degree and work on average, 3-7 years with critically ill patients in intensive care units before returning to an accredited nurse anesthesia program for an additional three years of rigorous didactic and clinical education

Nebraska should prioritize educating, recruiting, and retaining independently licensed CRNAs and physicians to ensure continued quality and access to care. AAs are not the answer to the healthcare shortage in the immediate future. In fact, introducing AAs in Nebraska will only further exacerbate the shortage of our independent providers. Rural hospitals depend on CRNAs to keep their doors open by providing quality, cost-effective care.

I urge you to recommend AGAINST licensure of Anesthesiologist Assistants.

Most Sincerely,

F. Jordan Colwell DBA, MHA, RN